

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 OES-03 EUR-12 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04

H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05 COME-00 EB-07 FRB-03 TRSE-00

XMB-02 OPIC-03 CIEP-01 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 STR-04

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FM AMEMBASSY TANANARIVE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7540

NASA HQS WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L TANANARIVE 1450

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, NASA, MA, US, FR

SUBJECT: NASA CLOSURE: MALAGASY SILENCE CONTINUES

REF: A. TANANARIVE A-062 8/14/75; B. TANANARIVE 1403

SUMMARY:

GOMR HAS NOT RESPONDED TO U.S. NOTE ON NASA OF TWO WEEKS AGO. PRESIDENT RATSIRAKA HAS ASSUMED LOWER PUBLIC PROFILE. FRENCH ALSO HAVE MADE LITTLE PROGRESS ON NEGOTIATIONS WITH GOMR ON NATIONALIZATIONS. SOURCES CLOSE TO RATSIRAKA INDICATE THAT HE HAS BEEN PREOCCUPIED WITH PREPARATION OF FORTHCOMING MAJOR POLICY SPEECH. END SUMMARY.

1. DEPUTY CHIEF OF CABINET RADAODY-RAKOTODRAVAO ON AUGUST 18 DURING INDONESIAN RECEPTION EXPRESSED HIS REGRET TO EMBASSY OFFICERS OVER NASA CLOSURE AND BEMOANED PROBLEM OF UNEMPLOYED MALAGASY STATION PERSONNEL. RADAODY ALSO WONDERED ALOUD TO ECONOMIC OFFICER WHETHER IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE TO REOPEN STATION. ECONOMIC OFFICER GAVE NONCOMMITTAL RESPONSE, CONFIDENTIAL

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BUT RADOADY DID NOT PURSUE THIS POINT.

2. CHARGE, IN SEPARATE CONVERSATION WITH DIRECTOR OF BILATERAL AFFAIRS AT MOFA RAKOTODRAMASY, ASKED HIM ON AUGUST 20 IF GOMR HAD CONCLUDED INVENTORY AT STATION. DIRECTOR SAID GENDARMERIE AT STATION DID NOT PERMIT GOMR TECHNICIANS TO ENTER STATION BECAUSE THEY LACK WRITTEN ORDER FROM PRESIDENT RATSIRAKA. ORDER HAD NOT YET BEEN OBTAINED HE ADDED. RAKOTODRAMASY CALLED IN CHARGE AUGUST 21 TO ASK IF PROVISIONAL WORK CERTIFICATES COULD BE PREPARED BY EMBASSY FOR MALAGASY STATION EMPLOYEES. CERTIFICATES ARE NEEDED FOR SEEKING NEW EMPLOYMENT AND NEED REFLECT ONLY DATES OF EMPLOYMENT. CHARGE AGREED, SUBJECT TO NASA APPROVAL. PLEASE ADVISE.

3. FRENCH AMBASSADOR ANDRE ROGER TOLD CHARGE AUGUST 20 THAT HE THOUGHT FRENCH WERE HAVING AS MANY PROBLEMS WITH GOMR IN RESOLVING DIFFICULTIES AS AMERICANS. HE SAID THERE HAS BEEN LITTLE MOVEMENT ON SETTLING NATIONALIZATION OF FRENCH BANKS AND INSURANCE COMPANIES. AMBASSADOR SAID SINCE GOMR FINANCE MINISTER'S RETURN FROM VISIT TO PARIS AUGUST 7 THERE HAVE BEEN NO NEW DEVELOPMENTS. FRENCH BANKS REJECTED GOMR OFFER OF ABOUT 12 PERCENT COMPENSATION FOR THEIR ASSETS. (SEE REFAIR). ROGER INDICATED THAT HE BELIEVED THAT RATSIRAKA HAD BEEN COUNSELED TO SLOW DOWN BY HIS ADVISORS AND WAS CAREFULLY PONDERING HIS NEXT MOVES IN VIEW OF HIS LACK OF SUCCESS IN GETTING MONEY OUT OF U.S. OR FRANCE. ROGER SAID THAT SOVIET AMBASSADOR HAD TOLD HIM THAT SOVIETS HAD RECENTLY REJECTED GOMR REQUEST FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AND HAD OFFERED MORE SCHHOLORSHIPS INSTEAD. FRENCH AMBASSADOR NOTED THAT PRC CREDITS (REFTEL) DID LITTLE TO ALLEVIATE GOMR FINANCIAL PROBLEMS; AMBASSADOR SAID GOMR FOREIGN EXCHANGE RESERVES CONTINUE TO PLUNGE DOWNWARD.

4. CHIEF OF CABINET SOLOFOSON CONFIRMED TO FRENCH AMBASSADOR THAT PRESIDENT RATSIRAKA IS WORKING ON MAJOR POLICY SPEECH FOR DELIVERY IN LATE AUGUST OR EARLY SEPTEMBER. SOLOFOSON DECLINED TO DISCUSS GENERAL TENURE OF SPEECH.

5. EMBASSY COMMENT: GOMR OFFICIALS HAVE PROVED RELUCTANT
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IN GENERAL TO DISCUSS BROAD POLICY QUESTIONS WITH THIS EMBASSY AND OTHER DIPLOMATS FOR PAST FEW WEEKS. ALL INVITATIONS FROM DIPLOMATIC CORPS TO GOMR OFFICIALS DOWN TO AND INCLUDING SECRETARIES GENERAL MUST NOW BE FORWARDED TO CHIEF OF CABINET FOR APPROVAL AND ONWARD TRANSMISSION. RESULT IS THAT OPPORTUNITIES FOR INSIGHTS INTO GOMR THINKING ARE DIMINISHED. MOST OBSERVERS AGREE THAT RATSIRAKA MUST HIMSELF REALIZE THAT HIS TACTICS OF PAST TWO MONTHS HAVE

NOT BEEN VERY PRODUCTIVE. QUESTION REMAINS, HOWEVER,
WHETHER RATSIRAKA HAS HAD SUFFICIENT TIME TO DIGEST THIS
EXPERIENCE AND DRAW APPROPRIATE CONCLUSIONS FOR FUTURE
POLICY.
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